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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/050,797	01/18/2002	Kazuichi Isaka	111697	9586
25944	7590	10/10/2003		
OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC P.O. BOX 19928 ALEXANDRIA, VA 22320			EXAMINER NAFF, DAVID M	
			ART UNIT 1651	PAPER NUMBER

DATE MAILED: 10/10/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/050,797	ISAKA ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	David M. Naff	1651	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
 - If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
 - Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 January 2002 .

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

sposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-8 is/are pending in the application.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-8 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-8 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____ .
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 2/03 . 6) Other: _____ .

Claims examined on the merits are 1-8 which are all claims in the application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C.

5 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

10 Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

15 The claims are unclear as to the process carried out by requiring a use of the immobilized microorganism to remove a material from water without specifying how the use is performed.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

20 (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

25 This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of

each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

5 Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Levy (5,679,364) in view of Reischl (4,608,397).

The claims are drawn to removing an exogenous endocrine-disrupting chemical in water by use of a microorganism immobilized on a carrier wherein the carrier is produced by mixing a hydrophobic 10 prepolymer and a hydrophilic prepolymer.

Levy discloses removing contaminants from water by treating the water with a polymer containing a microorganism.

Reischl discloses a polymer composition containing a microorganism and advantageously a mixture of hydrophilic and 15 hydrophobic prepolymers (col 10, lines 5-7).

It would have been obvious to form the polymer of Levy using a mixture of hydrophilic and hydrophobic prepolymers as suggested by Reischl as being advantageous when forming a polymer containing a microorganism. The weight of hydrophilic prepolymer in claims 2 and 20 4 would have been a matter of optimization requiring only limited routine experimentation within the skill of the art. The microorganisms of Levy are in the polymer as required by claim 3. Removing an exogenous endocrine-disrupting chemical is obvious since Levy intends to remove contaminants in general from water.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claims 5-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the references as applied to claims 1-4 above, and further in view of Offenbacher et al (5,928,918).

5 The claims require using a polymer prepared by polymerizing a prepolymer containing both hydrophilic and hydrophobic groups.

Offenbacher et al disclose immobilizing enzymes with a polymer containing both nonpolar and polar groups.

Rather than using hydrophilic and hydrophobic prepolymers in Levy 10 as set forth above, it would have been obvious to use a prepolymer containing both hydrophilic and hydrophobic groups as disclosed by Offenbacher. The proportions in claims 6 and 7 would have been matters of optimization requiring limited routine experimentation well within the skill of the art.

15 Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David M. Naff whose telephone number is 703-308-0520. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9:30-6:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, 20 the examiner's supervisor, Mike Wityshyn can be reached on 703-308-4743. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this 25 application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0196.

Application/Control Number: 10/050,797
Art Unit: 1651

Page 5



David M. Naff
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1651

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